

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following a **Final Action** on merits in response to the communication received on **1/23/08**.

Acknowledgement

2. The amendments received on **1/23/08** have been entered. As such **claims 1-20** are pending

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 1- 20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over ***Dodson et al*** (2005/0222944) in view of ***Sommers et al*** (2004/0002876).

As per claim 1, *Dodson* discloses a method for processing an expense report (see Abstract), comprising:

receiving at an expense report agent (See para **0022** and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 # 58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement

for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product, (para **0045**; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receiving the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (para **0033** and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

inserting the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0015**, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement (para **0035**, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Dodson discloses all elements of the invention, but fails explicitly to disclose that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more

transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product.

Sommers being in the same field of invention discloses that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0024**, line 11; via the traveler updates and enters travel expense data such as fuel [inherently from fuel pump retailer for rented automobile transport vehicle) into the on-line **TEMS** [travel expense management system] in **step 236** and **TEMS** automatically generates an electronic expense report in **step 238** [inherent automatic request may be for transaction information from fuel retailers as per receipt records])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the disclosure and features mentioned by **Dodson** and to include the features as taught by **Sommers** to facilitate the travelers quick and efficient reimbursement process.

As per claim 2, Dodson discloses further step of performing at least one of the following in response to the evaluation:

initiating the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0016**, lines 15-20 and para **0035**, lines 11-15; via the expense manager review expense report **44** for various determinations);

denying the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 15; via reject the expense report **44**); and

returning the expense report to a user system associated with the expense report (para 0035, lines 15-20; via request additional information from the employee).

As per claim 3, *Dodson* discloses the steps of evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement further comprises:

accessing an expense policy governing the expense report (para **0037**; via accounting rules **70** including policy of the organization, standard; and

evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense policy (para **0037**, via accounting module **22** may apply a set of accounting rules **70** to the expense list in an expense report **44** related to the amount of particular type of expense valid for reimbursement).

As per claims 4, 10 and 16, *Dodson* fails exclusively to teach the steps of determining that an expense authorization request is approved and evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense authorization request.

However, ***Sommers*** in the same field of invention discloses the travel authorization module used to provide users to input specific travel requirement and initiation of request through approval and expense report to be routed electronically through appropriate approval levels for approval and disbursement (para **0033-0036**; via travel authorization request and approval).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to include the concept of prior expense authorization approval electronically as taught by ***Sommers*** in order to facilitate the easy approval process of expense report by the approvers regardless of level (para **0036**)

As per claim 5, *Dodson* discloses the step of evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement further comprises:

identifying a non-conforming line item of a plurality of line items of the expense report (para **0035**, line 11-18; via expense manager review and make various determinations regarding particular expense items, request a receipt **62** for one or more particular expenses listed on the expense report **44**, inherently verifying conforming or non-conforming line items with report **44**);

retrieving a chain of command corresponding to the non-conforming line item, the chain of command comprising a sequence of authorities (para **0035**, lines 1-5; via Management Module **20** cooperate with module **16** to provide an interface for one or more expense managers such as employee's manager or supervisor according to authority sequence); and

performing the following for at least one authority of the sequence of authorities until the non-conforming line item is resolved; selecting an authority of the sequence of authorities as a current authority (para **0035**, lines 6-11; via Management module **20** provides expense manager interface to view expense report **44**);

sending the expense report to an authority expense report agent corresponding to the current authority (para **0016**, line 7; via the expense report to an management system);

determining if the non-conforming line item has been resolved; and selecting a next authority of the sequence of authorities as the current authority if the non-

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conforming line item has not been resolved (para **0016**; via index, identified ID manger and accounting system).

As per claim 6, *Dodson* discloses the step of comprising resolving the non-conforming line item by performing at least one of the following:

determining that the non-conforming line item has been approved by an authority that can approve the non-conforming line item (para **0035**, lines 1-19; via Management module **20** and the expense manager determines expense items listed on the expense report **44** for approval);

determining that the non-conforming line item has been corrected by an authority that can correct the non-conforming line item; and determining that the non-conforming line item has been rejected (para **0016**; via index, identified ID manger and accounting system)..

As per claim 7, *Dodson* discloses an expense report agent for processing an expense report (para **0022-0023**), comprising:

an interface operable to receive one or more transaction identifiers associated with an expense report, a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0040**, lines 10-14; via interfaces between modules 12-22 and/or with external entities); and

a processing engine (para **0022**, via computers with processors and devices) coupled to the interface and operable to:

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more

transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0045**; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (para **0033** and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions(para **0015**, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (para **0035**, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Dodson discloses all elements of the invention, but fails explicitly to disclose that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product.

Sommers being in the same field of invention discloses that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction

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identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0024**, line 11; via the traveler updates and enters travel expense data such as fuel [inherently from fuel pump retailer for rented automobile transport vehicle) into the on-line **TEMS** [travel expense management system] in **step 236** and **TEMS** automatically generates an electronic expense report in **step 238** [inherent automatic request may be for transaction information from fuel retailers as per receipt records])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the disclosure and features mentioned by **Dodson** and to include the features as taught by **Sommers** to facilitate the travelers quick and efficient reimbursement process.

Claim 8 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 2**

Claim 9 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 3**

Claim 11 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 5**

Claim 12 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 6**

As per claim 13, Dodson discloses Logic for processing an expense report, the logic embodied in a medium and operable (para **0039**, Modules 12-22 in system **10** includes software and /or hardware operable to provide the functionality and inherent programmable logic) to:

receive at an expense report agent (para **0022** and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 #58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of

one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product. (para **0045**; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (**0033** and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (**0015**, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (para **0035**, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Dodson discloses all elements of the invention, but fails explicitly to disclose that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more

transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product.

Sommers being in the same field of invention discloses that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0024**, line 11; via the traveler updates and enters travel expense data such as fuel [inherently from fuel pump retailer for rented automobile transport vehicle) into the on-line **TEMS** [travel expense management system] in **step 236** and **TEMS** automatically generates an electronic expense report in **step 238** [inherent automatic request may be for transaction information from fuel retailers as per receipt records])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the disclosure and features mentioned by **Dodson** and to include the features as taught by **Sommers** to facilitate the travelers quick and efficient reimbursement process.

Claim 14 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 2**

Claim 15 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 3**

Claim 17 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 5**

Claim 18 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 6**

As per claim 19, Dodson discloses a system for processing an expense report, comprising:

means for receiving at an expense report agent (para **0022** and **Fig.1**, via

expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers associated with an expense report, a transaction identifier (**Fig.1 #58**) corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report (**Fig.1 #44**) requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

means for automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product. (para 0045; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

means for receiving the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (para **0033** and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

means for inserting the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0015**, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

means for evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement (para **0035**, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Dodson discloses all elements of the invention, but fails explicitly to disclose that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product.

Sommers being in the same field of invention discloses the step of automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0024**, line 11; via the traveler updates and enters travel expense data such as fuel [inherently from fuel pump retailer for rented automobile transport vehicle) into the on-line **TEMS** [travel expense management system] in **step 236** and **TEMS** automatically generates an electronic expense report in **step 238** [inherent automatic request may be for transaction information from fuel retailers as per receipt records])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the disclosure and features mentioned by **Dodson** and to include the features as taught by **Sommers** to facilitate the travelers quick and efficient reimbursement process.

As per claim 20, Dodson discloses a method for processing an expense report, comprising:

receiving at an expense report agent (para **0022** and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 # 58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a

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transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0045**; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (para **0033** and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0015**, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (para **0035**, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement), the expense report evaluated by:

accessing an expense policy governing the expense report (para **0037**; via accounting rules **70** including policy of the organization, standard; and

evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense policy (para 0037, via accounting module **22** may apply a set of accounting rules **70** to the expense list in an expense report **44** related to the amount of particular type of expense valid for reimbursement);

the expense report further evaluated by:

identifying a non-conforming line item of a plurality of line items of the expense report (para **0035**, line 11-18; via expense manager review and make various determinations regarding particular expense items, request a receipt **62** for one or more particular expenses listed on the expense report **44**, inherently verifying conforming or non-conforming line items with report **44**);

retrieving a chain of command corresponding to the non-conforming line item, the chain of command comprising a sequence of authorities (para **0035**, lines 1-5; via Management Module **20** cooperate with module **16** to provide an interface for one or more expense managers such as employee's manager or supervisor according to authority sequence); and

performing the following for at least one authority of the sequence of authorities until the non-conforming line item is resolved;

selecting an authority of the sequence of authorities as a current authority (para **0035**, lines 6-11; via Management module **20** provides expense manager interface to view expense report **44**);

sending the expense report to an authority expense report agent corresponding to the current authority; determining if the non-conforming line item has

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been resolved, the non-conforming line item resolved by performing at least one of the following:

determining that the non-conforming line item has been approved by an authority that can approve the non-conforming line item (para **0035**, lines 1-19; via Management module **20** and the expense manager determines expense items listed on the expense report **44** for approval);

determining that the non-conforming line item has been corrected by an authority that can correct the non-conforming line item; and determining that the non-conforming line item has been rejected; and selecting a next authority of the sequence of authorities as the current authority if the non-conforming line item has not been resolved(para **0035**, lines 1-19; via Management module **20** and the expense manager determines expense items listed on the expense report **44** for approval); and performing at least one of the following in response to the evaluation:

initiating the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0016**, lines 15-20 and para **0035**, lines 11-15; via the expense manager review expense report **44** for various determinations);

denying the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para **0035**, line 15; via reject the expense report **44**); and

returning the expense report to a user system associated with the expense report (para **Dodson** discloses all elements of the invention, but fails explicitly to disclose that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one

or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product.

Sommers being in the same field of invention discloses that automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems, a retailer system used by a retailer that sells a product (para **0024**, line 11; via the traveler updates and enters travel expense data such as fuel [inherently from fuel pump retailer for rented automobile transport vehicle) into the on-line **TEMS** [travel expense management system] in **step 236** and **TEMS** automatically generates an electronic expense report in **step 238** [inherent automatic request may be for transaction information from fuel retailers as per receipt records])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the disclosure and features mentioned by **Dodson** and to include the features as taught by **Sommers** to facilitate the travelers quick and efficient reimbursement process. **0035**, lines 15-20; via request additional information from the employee).

Dodson also fails to exclusively disclose the steps of determining that an expense authorization request is approved and evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense authorization request.

However, **Sommers** in the same field of invention discloses the steps of determining that an expense authorization request is approved and evaluating the

expense report in accordance with the expense authorization request (para **0033-0036**; via travel authorization request and approval).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to include the concept of prior expense authorization approval electronically as taught by **Sommers** in order to facilitate the easy approval process of expense report by the approvers regardless of level (para **0036**).

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to **claims 1-20** have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant argued, "automatically requesting transaction information." (See para **0004**, "the expense report.....automatically... a request to retrieve one or more of the electronic images of the receipts."

Applicant also argued, "receiving the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format." (see para **0003**, lines 7-13; via the expense report is automatically identified based on received computer readable identifier, a link is automatically generated between the identified expense report and the electronic images of the one or more receipts. Also see para **0024**[Sommer] for fuel retailer pump station receipt expense data online **TEMS** in step **236**).

Conclusion

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Cheng et al (2003/0088487) discloses Travel Expense Reimbursement system and method.

Mitchel (2004/0225567) discloses Point-Of-Sale Receipt Generation.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mohamed H. Ali whose telephone number is 571-270-3021. The examiner can normally be reached on 8.00 to 6.00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on 571-272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MA

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